

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR (Latvia)  
SUBJECT VEF Factory, Riga

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE DISTR. 10 June 1948 50X1-HUM

NO. OF PAGES 4

PLACE  
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NO. OF ENCLS.  
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO. 50X1-HUM

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1. The VEF Factory is of all-Union importance and is controlled by the Ministry of Signal Equipment Industry of the USSR. The address of the factory is No. 19 Brivibas Gatve (street), Riga.

Background

2. This factory began operating in 1900, producing equipment for the postal and telegraph establishments of Russia. After World War I, when Latvia became an independent country, the factory changed to the production of articles for Latvian requirements. In 1940, when Latvia was again embodied in the USSR, the factory became a State factory.
3. In 1940 and 1941, before the outbreak of war against Germany, the factory specialized in the production of telephone equipment, radio receivers, and automatic telephone exchanges. By June 1941, it employed about 2,700 persons. When Riga was captured by Germany, the factory underwent certain organizational changes and began working for the German Army. In October 1944, the Germans, before their evacuation, removed to Germany almost all factory equipment and some specialists, destroyed part of the factory buildings, and blew up the boiler room, waterworks, and some of the other installations.
4. Reconstruction began immediately on the recapture of Riga by Soviet troops in October 1944. In January 1945, the factory already had over 1,000 workers. Equipment was brought from various factories in the USSR and from Germany after the capitulation.

Shops

5. In February 1948, the VEF Factory had the following twenty-seven shops.

Engineering shop (mekhanicheski tsekh)  
Tool shop (instrumentalni tsekh)  
Fitting and stamping shop (slesarno-shtampovochny tsekh)  
Plastics shop (tsekh plasticheskikh vass): Part of the processing equipment is of German origin.  
Galvanoplastic shop (galvanicheski tsekh)

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DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: EDA REG. 77/1223

Date: 04-05-78

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Foundry (litsiny tsekh)  
 Woodworking shop (derevoobdelochny tsekh)  
 Joiners' shop (stolyarny tsekh)  
 Frame shop (karkasny tsekh)  
 Varnishing shop (lakirovochny tsekh)  
 Engineering repair shop (mashino-remontny tsekh): At present, this shop is producing special precision machine tools for the requirements of the factory, such as drilling, milling cutter, and other small-size machines for high precision work.  
 Photographic paper shop (tsekh fotograficheskoi bumagi)  
 Electric bulb shop (elektrolampovy tsekh)  
 Generator (?) shop (tsekh elektrotekhnicheskikh istochnikov pitaniya)  
 Commutator shop (kommutatornyi tsekh)  
 Loudspeaker (?) shop (tsekh translatsionnykh dinamikov)  
 Mine telephone equipment shop (tsekh shakhtnykh telefonnykh apparatov)  
 Relay shop (releinyi tsekh): Producing relay equipment for telephone exchanges.  
 Automatic telephone exchange shop (tsekh avtomaticheskikh telefonnykh stantsii or ATS)  
 Condenser and resistance shop (tsekh po vypusku kondensatorov i soprotivleni)  
 Radio assembly shop (radiomontazhny tsekh): Conveyor method.  
 Electrical equipment assembly shop (elektromontazhny tsekh)  
 Experimental shop (eksperimentalny tsekh)  
 Consumer goods shop (tsekh shirotpotreba)  
 Covering (?) shop (tsekh pokrytiya): Zinc-plating, nickel-plating, silver-plating, etching, and degreasing.  
 Transport shop (transportny tsekh)  
 Electric power station (tsekh elektrostantsi): At present, the factory has its own electric power station, but in 1941 electric power had to be supplied from the Riga municipal electric power station.

6. The aircraft shop and the "Minox" photcamera shop, which existed when Latvia was independent, no longer exist and aircraft and photcameras are no longer produced by the factory.
7. In addition to the above shops, the factory has a large design bureau (konstruktorskoe byuro), divided into three sections, including a radio bureau. The factory also has several other sections, including a technical control section (otdel tekhnicheskogo kontrolya), a supply section (otdel snabzheniya), and a labor and wages section (otdel truda i zarplaty). There is also a bureau for rationalization and inventions (byuro ratsionalizatsii i izobretatelstva), which plays a very important part in the factory. An enormous number of inventions and improvement proposals are received for consideration by this bureau and a great number of them have actually been put into effect. In 1947, many workmen started earning large amounts of money by accomplishing the quotas of work normal for several days in a single day. In October 1947, all technical production norms were increased by over 50%; but, despite this, in February 1948 many workmen were again accomplishing several norms in a single day, thanks to some small inventions and reorganization of production. The question of raising the norms has been brought up again, as well as that of the reduction of the price of the articles produced. At a meeting in January 1947, Factory Director Galle said that in 1947 the factory produced a profit of over 30 million rubles for the State.

#### Production and Equipment

8. The factory specializes in the production of the following articles:

VEF radio receiving sets (radiopriemnik VEF) of several tubes  
 Loudspeakers (translyatsionnyi dinamik) of several tubes; the latest types have boxes made of a plastic substance rather than of wood.  
 Powerful factory loudspeakers are installed in all factory shops and in all communal dwellings.

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Telephone apparatus (telefonnyi apparat)  
Mine telephone apparatus (shakhtnyi telefonnyi apparat)  
Automatic telephone exchanges (avtomaticheskaya telefonnaya stantsiya)  
Electric bulbs (elektrolampa)  
Photographic paper  
Other consumer goods

In 1947, the factory produced (in round figures):

Telephone apparatus: about 90,000  
Loudspeakers: about 105,000  
Mine telephone apparatus: about 4,000  
Telephone exchanges: The factory produces several types of automatic telephone exchanges: TsB for 280 subscribers; for 500 subscribers, the latest type (five exchanges produced); for 700 subscribers; and for 1,400 subscribers. The 1947 production amounted to enough exchanges to handle a total of 72,000 subscribers.

9. An increase in the production of telephone apparatus continued throughout 1947 and is continuing. The output almost doubled between January 1947 and January 1948, reaching about 10,000 telephone apparatus in January 1948.
10. The increase in the output of radio receiving sets was slow in 1947 because of preparations for the production of new types. Mass production of a 13-tube M-137 receiving set, one of the new types, will be started in 1948.
11. The production of loudspeakers increased rapidly in 1947. In January 1947, the output was about 4,000 loudspeakers and by January 1948 had reached about 12,000. The output is still increasing.
12. The production of mine telephone apparatus was started at the VEF factory at the end of 1946 according to drawings and specimens of the Krasnaya Zarya Factory in Leningrad, the only factory in the USSR which was producing these telephones. During the first few months, the output of these heavy cast-iron apparatus with earphones was about 40-50. By December 1947, the factory was already producing about 900 per month. A delegation of the VEF Factory left in February 1948 to visit the Krasnaya Zarya Factory with a report on the complete mastery of the production of these apparatus. It is presumed that the production of mine telephone apparatus for the whole of the coal industry of the USSR will be concentrated at the VEF Factory and that the Krasnaya Zarya Factory will stop this production.
13. In addition to the above production, in December 1947 the VEF Factory was completing the assembly of a very large interurban telephone exchange (mezhdugorodnaya telefonnaya stantsiya or MTS). The exchange comprised about 70 small portable telephone exchanges. Tests were to take place in March, after which the VEF Factory was to start mass production of these interurban exchanges.
14. The factory has about 2,600 machine tools, automatic machines, presses, and other large units of equipment.

#### Personnel

15. In January 1948, the number of personnel at the VEF Factory was about 4,300, of whom about one-sixth were Russians. Most of these Russians arrived in Riga at the beginning of the reconstruction of the factory.
16. The head of the factory is Director G. I. Gaile, a Deputy of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR.

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Chief Engineer is Egle.  
 Deputy Chief Engineer is V.S. Goldberg.  
 Chief Technologist is Aleksandrov  
 Chief of the Bureau for Rationalization and Inventions is Ratsis.  
 Chief of the Engineering Shop is Liepkaln.  
 Chief of the Tool Shop is Pampe.  
 Deputy Chiefs of the Tool Shop are Khlemanov and Strauberg.  
 Chief of the Fitting-Stamping Shop is Marchenko.  
 Chief of the Varnishing Shop is Kurtsyn.  
 Chief of the Loudspeaker Shop is Grant.  
 Chief of the Mine Telephone Equipment Shop is Kalnyn.  
 Chief of the Automatic Telephone Exchange Shop is Grivin.  
 Chief of the Radio Assembly Shop is Yakovich.  
 Chief of the Radio Bureau is Volosnikov.

17. Absenteeism occurs fairly frequently at the factory but lately very severe measures have been introduced. The wages are almost always paid irregularly and are delayed.

#### Miscellaneous

18. In competitions between factories under the Ministry of Signal Equipment Industry of the USSR during 1947, the VEF Factory retained the (transferable) Red Banner (Perekhodyashchee Krasnoe Znamya) for eight months. The factory is continuing to develop and to expand. Delay in production is often due to shortages of raw and other materials. There were days when, because of lack of materials at the factory, chiefs of factory shops let part of the workers go home on condition that when materials arrived they would work double quotas and make up for the loss of time.

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The communal dwellings are, on the whole, satisfactory but there are always misunderstandings in view of the insufficient number of kitchens and lavatories. The communal dwellings are also infested with bedbugs. Newly arriving workmen with families find it very difficult, in fact almost impossible, to obtain decent accommodations. They are given accommodations in basements requiring extensive repairs, often without heating. The workmen themselves must gradually make these premises habitable.

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